



CHAPTER IX—Continued.

"Isn't he? Too much of the watching dog about him, I suppose. As for fast friends, there is not much friendship between Wyatt and me. He's a useful fellow to have about one, that's all. He has served me faithfully, and has got well paid for his services. It's a matter of pounds shillings, and pence on his side, and a matter of convenience on mine. No doubt Wyatt knows that as well as I do."

"Don't you think friendship on such a basis may be rather an insecure bond?" said Constance, gravely; "and that a man who can consent to profess friendship on such degrading terms is likely to be half an enemy?"

"Oh, I don't go in for such high-flown ethics. Jim Wyatt knows that it's his interest to serve me well, and that it's as much as his life is worth to play me false. Jim and I understand one another perfectly, Constance, you may be sure."

"I am sure that he understands you," answered Constance.

But Gilbert had gone before she had finished her sentence.

Baby, christened Christabel, after the late Lady Claryand, was nearly a twelvemonth old, and had, arrived, in the opinion of mother and nurse, at the most interesting epoch of babyhood.

Her tender cooing, her joyous chucklings, her pretty cackling noises,

as of anxious maternal heart, causing the mother to be impatiently in a cage of broken syllables, which only maternal love could interpret, were an inexhaustible fountain of delight. She was the blithest and happiest of babies, and every object in creation with which she became newly acquainted was a source of rapture to her. The flowers, the birds, the insect life of that balmy pine forest, filled her with delight. The soft blue eyes sparkled with pleasure, the rose-bud lips babbled her wordless wonder, the little feet danced with ecstasy.

"Oh," cried the delighted mother, "I shall always be just like this, my plaything, my darling! Of course, I shall love her just as dearly when she is older—a long-armed, lanky girl in a brown holland pinata, always inking her fingers and getting into trouble about her lessons like the other sisters; and we who were in the school-room; and she can never be so pretty or so sweet again, can she, Martha?"

"Lor, mum, she'll always be a love," replied the devoted nurse; "and as for her arms being long, and her fingers inky, you won't love her a bit less, and I'm sure, I hope she won't be worried with too many lessons, for I do think great folks' children are to be pitied, half their time cooped up in school rooms or stretched out on blackboards, or strumming on the piano, while poor children are running wild in the forest."

"Oh, Martha, how shocking," cried Mrs. Sinclair, pretending to be horrified, "to think that one of my favorite pupils should underrate the value of education."

"Oh, indeed, ma'am, I have no such thoughts. I have often felt what a blessing it is to be able to read a good book and write a decent letter. But I never can think that life was meant to be all education."

"Life is all education, Martha," answered her mistress, with a sigh, "but not the education of grammars and dictionaries. The world is our school and time our schoolmaster. No, Martha, my Christabel shall not be harassed with too much learning. We won't try to make her a paragon. Her life shall be all happiness and freedom, and she shall grow up without the knowledge of care or evil, except the sorrows of others, and these she shall hear; and she shall marry a man she loves, whether he is rich or poor, for I am sure my sweet one would never love a bad man."

"I don't think that ma'am," reiterated Martha; "looks are so deceiving. I'm sure there was my own cousin, on the father's side, Susan Tadgore, married the handsomest young man in Marchbrook village, and before they'd been two years married he took to drinking, and was so neglectful of himself you wouldn't have known him; and his whiskers, that he used to take such pride in, are all brown and shaggy, like a straw Scotch terrier."

The day after that somewhat unpleasant tête-à-tête between husband and wife, Gilbert Sinclair announced his intention of going back to England for the Leger.

"I have never missed a Leger," he said, as if attendance at that race were a plauso duty, like the Communion service on Ash-Wednesday, "and I shouldn't like to miss this race."

"Hadn't we better go home at once, then, Gilbert? I am quite ready to return."

"I'd just as soon be sitting in a railway train as anywhere else."

"Does Mr. Wyatt go back with you?"

"No; Mr. Wyatt stays at Baden for the next week or so. He pretends to be here for the sake of the water, goes very little to the Kursaal, and lives quietly like a careful old bachelor who wished to mend a damaged constitution, but I should rather think he had some deeper game than water-drinking."

Gilbert departed; and Constance was alone with her child. The weather was delightful—cloudless skies, balmy days, blissful weather for the grape gatherers on the vine-clad slopes that sheltered one side of this quaint old village of Schoenheit. A river wound through the valley, a deep and rapid stream narrowing in this cleft of the hills, and utilized by some sawmills in the outskirts of the village, whence at certain seasons rafts of timber were floated down the Rhine.

A romantic road following the course of this river was one of Mrs. Sinclair's favorite drives. There were picture-esque old villages and romantic ruins to be explored, and many lovely spots to be shown to baby, who, although in-

articulate, was supposed to be appreciative.

Upon the first day of Gilbert's absence, Martha Briggs came home from her afternoon jaunt with baby, looking flushed and tired and complaining of sore throat. Constance was quick to take alarm. The poor girl was going to have a fever, perhaps, and must instantly be separated from baby. There was no medical man nearer than Baden, so Mrs. Sinclair sent the groom off at once to that town. She told him to inquire for the best English doctor in the place, or if there was no English practitioner at Baden, for the best German doctor. The moment she had given these instructions, however, it struck her that the man who was not remarkable for intelligence out of his stable, was likely to lose time in making his inquiries, and perhaps get misdirected at last.

"And then, said Mr. Paulton, 'I shall send you to Baden for a few days, before you go back to baby, and you must put aside all clothes that you have worn in the sick-room, and I think we shall escape all risk of infection.'

This was a good hearing. Constance was the only one in the house when she should be able to keep that rosy babbling child to her breast once more. Mademoiselle Duport had been a marvel of goodness throughout this anxious time.

"I shall never forget how good and thoughtful you have been, Melanie," said Constance, from her window, as the French girl stood in the garden, holding, setting out for her morning ramble.

"But it is a pleasure to serve Madame," shrieked Melanie, in her shrill treble.

"Monsieur returns this evening," said Constance, who had just received a hurried scrawl from Gilbert, naming the hour of his arrival; "you must take care that Christabel looks the prettiest."

"Ah, but she is always ravishingly pretty. If she were only a boy, Monsieur would idolize her."

"Where are you going this morning, Melanie?"

"To the ruined castle on the hill."

"Do you think that is a safe place for baby?"

"What could there be safer? What peril can Madame foresee?"

"I suppose it is safe, there as anywhere else, but I am still uneasy when she is away from me."

"But Madame's love for this little one is departed."

Melanie departed with her charge, and Constance went back to the sick-room to attend her patient while the sister enjoyed a few hours' comfortable sleep.

One o'clock was Christabel's dinner time, and Christabel's dinner was a business of no small importance in the mother's mind. One o'clock came, and there was no sign of Melanie and her charge, a curious thing, as Melanie was methodical and punctual to a praiseworthy degree, and was provided with a neat little silver watch to keep her acquainted with the time.

Two o'clock struck, and still no Melanie. Constance began to grow uneasy, and sent scouts to look for the nurse and child. But when 3 o'clock came and baby had not yet appeared, Constance became seriously alarmed, and put on her hat, and went out in search of the missing nurse. She would not listen to the servants who had just returned from their fruitless quest, but begged her to let them go in fresh directions while she waited the result at home.

"No," she said; "I could not rest. I must go myself. Send to the police, any one, the proper authorities. Tell them my child is lost. Let them send in every direction. You have been to the ruins?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"And there was no one there? You could hear nothing?"

"No, ma'am," answered Dawson, the groom; "the place was quite lonesome. There was nothing but grasshoppers chirping."

To be continued.

CHAPTER X.

THE CRUEL RIVER.

Mrs. Sinclair's precaution had been in wise futile. Mr. Paulton pronounced that Martha's symptoms pointed only too plainly to some kind of tertian scarlet fever—possibly typhoid. In any case there could not be too much care taken to guard against contagion. The village was airy and spacious, and Mrs. Sinclair's sick-room at some distance from the nursery. There would be no necessity, therefore, Mr. Paulton said, for the removal of the child to another house. He would send a nursing sister from Baden—an experienced woman to whose care the sick-room might be safely confided.

The sister came—a middle-aged woman in the somber garb of her order, but with a pleasant, cheery face, that well became her snow-white head-gear. She showed herself kind and dexterous in nursing the sick girl, but before she had been three days in the house, Martha, who was now in a raging fever, took a dislike to the nurse, and raved wildly about this black-robed figure at her bedside. In vain did the sister endeavor to reassure her. To the girl's wandering wits the foreign tongue seemed like the gibberish of some huge goblin. She shrieked for help, and Mrs. Sinclair ran in from an adjoining room to see what was amiss. Martha was calmed and comforted immediately by the sight of her mistress; and from that time Constance had shared herself to the sick-room and shared the nurse's watch.

This meant separation from Christabel, and that was a hard trial for the mother, who had never yet lived a day apart from her child; but Constance bore this bravely for the sake of the faithful girl—too thankful that her darling had escaped the fever which had so strangely stricken the nurse. The weather continued glorious, and baby seemed quite happy with Melanie, who roamed about with her in the porch, and went for long drives in the pony carriage under the care of the faithful Dawson, who was a pattern of sobriety and steadiness, and incapable of flirtation.

Mr. Wyatt rode over from Baden every other day to inquire about the nurse's progress—an inquiry which he might just as easily have made of the doctor in Baden—and this exhibition of good feeling on his part induced Constance to think that she had been mistaken in her estimate of his character.

The Gospel says "Judge not," she thought, and yet we are always sitting in judgment upon one another. Perhaps after all, Mr. Wyatt is as kind-hearted as his admirers think him, and I have done wrong in being prejudiced against him. He was Cyprian's friend too, and always speaks of him with particular affection."

Constance remembered that scene in the morning-room at Davenant. It was one of those unpleasant memories which do not grow fainter with the passage of years. She had been inclined to suspect James Wyatt of an unfeeling intention in his sudden announcement of Sir Cyprian's death—the wish to let her husband see how strong a hold her first love still had upon her heart. He, who had been Cyprian Davenant's friend and confidante, was likely to have known something of that earlier attachment, and least to have formed a shrewd guess at the truth.

"Perhaps I have suspected him wrongly in that affair," Constance thought, now that she was disposed to think more kindly of Mr. Wyatt. "His mention of Sir Cyprian might have been purely accidental."

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A romantic road following the course of this river was one of Mrs. Sinclair's favorite drives. There were picture-esque old villages and romantic ruins to be explored, and many lovely spots to be shown to baby, who, although in-

nurse's grasp and holding up her chubby arms as if she would fain have embraced her mother even at that distance. These interviews were a sorry substitute for the long happy hours of closest companionship which mother and child had enjoyed at Baden, but Constance bore the trial bravely. The patient was going on wonderfully well, Mr. Paulton said; the violence of the fever was considerably abated. It had proved a light attack of the scarlet fever, and not typhoid, as the doctor had feared; it might have proved. In a week the patient would most likely be on the high-road to recovery, and then Mrs. Sinclair could leave her entirely to the sister's care, since poor Martha was now restored to her right mind, and was quite reconciled to trial.

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To be continued.

"OLD NANCY."

An Ill-fit Still that Has Been Operated for Thirty Years.

The capture of an ill-fit still operated near Sinking Mountain by Deputy Collector Brown recalls a story of long-continued defiance of law, says an Elberton (Ga.) correspondent of the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. The still was bought in 1858, and was put to use on the plantation of the late George Dye. When the war opened it passed into the hands of a Habersham County whisky dealer, who did a rushing business for four years. There was no railroad at the time within 10 miles of the still, and the liquor made by "Old Nancy" as the still was fondly named, was the favorite trade not only throughout northeast Georgia, but cut across the lines into North and South Carolina. Once the still was embargoed by the officers of Habersham in 1863 because of the demoralization it created among the small boys who were about all there were about all there was left.

With the restoration of United States authority "Old Nancy" became contraband. Revenue prisoners brought before United States commissioners would tell all about how "Old Nancy" was prospering, but try as they would the officers never could capture the still. When the distillers of one community found themselves too closely pressed they would run the still over the mountain or down the creeks to where companions in lawlessness would secure possession of it, and they would run it until compelled to do likewise. This was the still in quest of which Lieut. McIntyre of the United States army was killed in Gilmore County in 1875. Subsequently it was run back east, and was still in use on Warwoman creek in Habersham county for several years.

On late the officers have heard that this will—this still which has been following for thirty years—was in operation in a secluded region near Sinking Mountain. Collector Brown, with an armed posse, successfully located the spot one night recently during a violent rainstorm. The moonshiners fled, giving the officers the opportunity of destroying the whole plant.

A Useful Tree.

The coco palm is the most useful tree on earth. Fresh water is procured from the nut before it is ripe, a single sample often containing three or four pounds of clear water, almost pure, save for a little sugar; the nut, when ripe, is very nutritious; the milk from the ripe nut is a good substitute for that of the cow; the young buds make good cabbage and greens; wine is made from the sap and flower stalks, and it is fermented and distilled to produce vinegar and brandy; the nutshells furnish utensils; and from the fibers are made all sorts of clothing, textile fabrics, and even the sails, ropes, and other cordage of ships; its jute is used in making paper, and its bark is used in making paper.

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